Principles For Understanding the Seerah

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شَيْخ صالِح آل الشَيخ

PRINCIPLES FOR UNDERSTANDING THE SEERAH

(THE BIOGRAPHY OF THE PROPHET)[1]

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In the Name of Allaah, the *Most Beneficent*, the *Most Merciful*,

[1] This lecture was given circa 2002 CE

All praise is due to Allaah, as he deserves to be praised, and all appreciation is due to Him, the *Majestic*, *Most High*, He is the Possessor of Virtue, Goodness and Blessings. From His great blessings on us, is the ending of Muhammad, upon him be prayers and peace, to us as a guide and a bringer of glad-tings and a warner.

"We have not sent you except as a mercy to all the worlds"

{*al-Anbiya (21): 107*}

"There has certainly been for you in the messenger of Allaah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allaah and the Last Day and (who) remembers Allaah often."

{*al-Ahzaab (33): 21*}

I testify that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allaah, Who has no partners, and I testify that Muhammad *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* us His servant, messenger and friend and with him *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* Allaah brought an end to *shirk* and its armies, and with him *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* Allaah established *tawheed* and its people. And with him *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*, gave sight (i.e. insight) to the people after having being blind (i.e. in insight and *deen*) and guided the people after misguidance. So what can be greater than Allaah's favour on us by sending Muhammad *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*? And what can be greater than the favour of Muhammad *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* on his *ummah*? As if they ransomed

themselves, their children, their families and their money, they still would not do duty to the right of Muhammad (upon him be prayers and peace), is he not the one who found us upon a way leading to the fire and then took us away from it. May prayers be upon our Prophet Muhammad for what he guided, taught and made clear and we bear witness that he conveyed the message and fulfilled the trust and advised the *ummah* and strove in the way of Allaah, with a rightful striving and left us upon a clear and pure way, its night is like its day and one does not divert from it after him *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* except that such a person is destroyed. Prayers and peace be upon his companions who helped, honoured and aided him. And may prayers and peace be upon all those who follow them in righteousness until the Day of Recompense.

To proceed:
I ask Allaah to make me and you from those who obey Him with an attentive heart and from those whose *du'a* is answered. O Allaah make us from those whose hearts are in awe of You and from those whose hearts are tender to Your remembrance. O Allaah guide us as there is no movement for us or power except with You. We seek refuge in You from acting lofty on the earth and from causing corruption upon it and we ask You to help us from faltering and from incorrect opinions and from being far from that which is correct. O Allaah grant us success, and You are the Owner of success and whoever guides then he is guided.

In beginning this lecture I would also like to thank the noble brothers from the *Maktabah Da'wah wa'l-Irshad* in al-Kharj for inviting me to present this lecture and being concerned with it and this is not strange at all as they are safeguarding that which is good. May Allaah grant them increase from His

Virtue and accept what they have worked hard towards in order to disseminate the truth and guidance.

The topic of this lecture is concerning the principles for understanding the *seerah* (biography) of al-Mustaphaa *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*. This lecture is not an admonition rather it is a foundational lecture regarding the issue of the *seerah* of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*. Therefore, it may be the case that all will benefit from it especially those who have some connection to knowledge, the *sunnah* and the *seerah*, and with *da'wah* and guidance. There is no doubt that the *seerah* of al-Mustaphaa *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* is something that the scholars past and present have given importance to. This is because the guidance of al-Mustaphaa *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* make things clear, Allaah says,

ĞÆĘģ ģǯȅǐ ĉǏǕǟ ǒǯȅǿ ƲǦ ǇǑį ǉȀǭ ǼĘǭį

"There has certainly been for you in the messenger of Allaah an excellent pattern..."

{*al-Ahzaab (33): 21*}

So the importance to the *seerah* is a must because with the *seerah*, and being concerned with it, is knowledge of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*, from his birth to his death, upon him be prayers and peace. With the *seerah* a Muslim knows what the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* and his companions were upon in spreading the religion and their striving and left the *ummah* upon a clear affair after them. Islaam did not spread with ease rather the prophet strived for help from His Lord, the Magnificent, Most High and also via the efforts of the noble companions; this will be apparent to you in the *seerah*. Also from the importance of knowing the *seerah* of al-Mustaphaa, upon him be prayers and peace, and the *seerah* of the

companions is that it places strong *eemaan* in the hearts of the people and strong certainty no matter what happens to them and no matter what Shaytaan and his armies try to do, as they have in the messenger of Allaah an excellent example and also with the companions. Some of the companions complained to the Prophet (upon him be prayers and peace) when they faced the intensity of the Quraysh upon them, he said *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*: *"There was before you a man that came and was sawn in half, cutting through his flesh and bones, yet this did not avert him from his deen. By the one in whose hand is my soul, this affair will be completed until a traveller will travel from Makkah to Sanaa' (or in another narration from Basra to Makkah) not fearing anything except Allaah."* This makes clear that the truth is not due to the vast numbers of the people and that the believer, if anything happens to him from the plots of Shaytaan or from the vast amount of desires and temptations, this should cause him to have more preservation of her/himself to the *deen* of Allaah as the companions (may Allaah be pleased with them) did not leave their *deen* and did not leave *tawheed* and did not leave off disassociating themselves from *shirk* and did not leave what they believed in due what had afflicted them, upon them is the pleasure of Allaah. So how can the condition of the people today who, maybe, leave off some things of the *deen* due to temptations, so when looking at the *seerah* and reading the *seerah* a Muslim achieves strength of certainty and strength of being ready and firm upon the *deen* of Allaah. For that reason, the heart of a believer achieves strength of honour in Islaam and honoured with the *tawheed* of Allaah and what he has established in his heart from knowledge of Allaah and *eemaan* in Muhammad *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*, and what Allaah revealed to His messenger,

"And to Allaah belongs (all) honour, and to His Messenger, and to the believers…"

{*al-Munaafiqoon (63): 8*}

This is something which has many benefits and every Muslim can benefit from looking at the *seerah* of al-Mustaphaa *(sallaallahu alayhi wassallam)*. Therefore, the foundation is that reading the *seerah* is not to be likened to reading stories and tales, rather within the reading of it (are to be found) lessons and contemplations. Because benefits can be taken from the *seerah* which benefit the believer and provide examples of guidance and goodness and adhering to the truth can be found within the *seerah*,

"So hold fast (O Muhammad) to that which is revealed to you. Verily, you are on a Straight Path."

{*az-Zukhruf (43): 43*}

"And indeed, it is a remembrance for you and you people, and you are (all) going to be questioned"

{*az-Zukhruf (43): 44*}

The people of knowledge have classified the aims of the *seerah* and the importance of being concerned with it. The intent of the *seerah* is that which was narrated about the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*, his companions, the *tabi'een* (successors) and about those who came after them from the people of knowledge in describing the conditions of the life and path of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassalam)* from when he was born (upon him be prayers and peace) to his passing to Allaah, *Majestic and Most High*. Therefore, the *seerah* is the narrative account of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi*

wassallam) from the time of his birth to his passing to Allaah. Within it are those things that happened to him from his birth and mention of those miraculous occurrences that took place during this time and the emergence of some of the events that took place at onset of his Prophethood *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* and the mention of his upbringing and mother and the turn of events that took place when he was young until Allaah sent him (to be a Prophet). The *seerah* therefore includes those things that were connected to the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* before his dispatch (as a Prophet) from his character and reputation. Likewise, the biography of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* is a narrative account of his life from when he was sent by Allaah to be a Prophet and carried forward the *da'wah* of Allaah and was patient upon it and the harms that happened to him and how he took forward the message and the paths that he took in order to carry forward the message, to the migration to al-Madeenah and his establishing of the first Islamic state to his passing to Allaah, *Majestic* and *Most High*. Many of the people of knowledge include within the *seerah* the period of the rightly guided caliphs and the conquests that they achieved. Therefore, the biography is a prepared way which is taken from that which has been traversed, saara ('to follow a way' or 'to set out on a way'), yaseeru sayran ('a pattern of behaviour'): [illegible] the way of life he followed, meaning: that which the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* traversed, the Qur'aan mentions the *seerah* with the meaning of a way of condition,

[illegible]

"We will return it to its former condition."

{*TaaHaa (20): 21*}

The *seerah* therefore includes the way that has been followed and the conditions upon which the way followed. For that reason, the *seerah* combines the way that has been followed and mentions within it the *maghaazee* (military expeditions) and conquests and what occurred to the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* and the companions after him during them. Therefore, *seerah* has a linguistic meaning and a technical meaning as I have mentioned to you, and the scholars have noted that what is intended with the *seerah* is that which has been recorded in special books and these were thus termed as books of *seerah*. With this we can benefit in that the initial recording of the *seerah* of al-Mustaphaa *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* and the military expeditions was highly developed for its time. The scholars have mentioned that Abbaan Ibn 'Uthmaan ibn Affaan, the son of the rightly guided caliph, was the first to establish and record the *seerah* of al-Mustaphaa *(sallallaahu aalyhi wassallam)* and the accounts of the military encounters and campaigns. The death of Abbaan was in 105 AH and took from many of the companions and in turn many of the successors took from him. From those who are famous for obtaining narrations of the *seerah* and relaying them is 'Urwah ibn Zubayr ibn al-Awwaam[2] and he was an Imaam of the *maghaazee* literature and he has his own account of the military campaigns which he authored and compiled entitled *'Maghaazee 'Urwah',* he compiled it and published it. Also from those who attached importance to the *seerah* was Ibn Shihaab az-Zuhree, the well known Imaam and the *Muhaddith* of his era.[3] He

[2] He died in 92 AH *(raheemahullaah)*. [TN]

[3] Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn 'Ubaydullaah ibn Shihaab az-Zuhree (50 AH – 124 AH (724 CE). He was one of the early *hadeeth* scholars and writers of Islamic literature. His grandfather, 'Abdullaah ibn Shihaab fought on the side of the *mushrikeen* against the Prophet Muhammad at Badr and Uhud, and his father Muslim ibn Shihaab was on the side of 'Abdullaah ibn Zubayr against the Umayyad dynasty. Az-Zuhree himself, along with other scholars including al-Hasan al-Basree, was later accused of being a "government scholar" as he accepted office with the 'Umayyads. Even though az-Zuhree was poor in wealth he was rich in knowledge, having memorised the whole Qur'aan in three months and constantly engaging himself in searching for knowledge. He also studied the genealogies and the poetry of the

compiled a book on the *seerah* and a book on the *maghaazee* from what 'Umar ibn 'Abdul'Azeez *(raheemahullaah)* mentioned to him. Also from those who wrote on the *seerah*, from the former scholars, from the successors, is 'Aasim ibn 'Umar ibn Qataadah[4] and other than him from the trustworthy people of knowledge from the first century (after *Hijrah*) and the beginning of the second century (after *Hijrah*). With this then, we make clear that the recording of the biography (*seerah*), was indeed very developed and for this reason the people of knowledge after this early period took from the successors in being concerned with the *seerah* and the *maghaazee* and combined what they heard from some of them (successors). The well known scholar Muhammad ibn Ishaaq al-Madani combined (the biography) in this way in his book *as-Seer wa'l-Maghaazee*. It is also said that he was directed to do this work by Abee Ja'far al-Mansoor, when Ibn Ishaaq visited Baghdaad, Abee Ja'far directed him to his son who said to Ibn Ishaaq **"Do you know this man"** Ibn Ishaaq replied **"Yes, this is the son of the**

Arabs, much of which he had also memorised due to his tremendous memory. Aboo Zinaad *(raheemahullaah)* mentioned of az-Zuhree that **"When I would be with az-Zuhree, he used to go about with tablets and sheets of paper with him, writing dwn everything that he heard, we used to laugh at him for that."** A student of az-Zuhree, Ma'mar, reports that his teacher would even write on the soles of his shoes when paper was not available. The first *mujaddid*, 'Umar ibn 'Abdul'Azeez *(raheemahullaah)* admired az-Zuhree and advised people to attend his lessons. Other scholars testified that az-Zuhree was a major *hadeeth* scholar and was trustworthy. Az-Zuhree was also very benevolent and gave much to the needy, having known poverty himself. Al-Layth ibn Sa'd *(raheemahullaah)*, another early major scholar, stated **"I have not seen anyone more generous than Ibn Shihaab. He used to help anyone who came to him, and if he had nothing he used to borrow."** Ibn Sa'd in his Tabaqaat noted that az-Zuhree collected so many hadeeth that after his death, his manuscripts needed several riding beasts to transport them. For more on az-Zuhree and the Arabic sources where his life and achievements are recorded see M.M Azami, *Studies in Early Hadith Literature* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 3rd Edition, 1992), pp.279-293. [TN]

[4] 'Aasim bin 'Umar bin Qataadah al-Ansaaree (d. circa 120 AH) was also a popular *tabi'ee*. According to Ibn Sa'd he was instructed by 'Umar ibn 'Abdul'Azeez to stay in the mosque of Damascus and teach the *maghaazee*. It is said that if after some time he came back to his home in Madeenah and continued teaching *maghaazee*. [TN]

leader of the believers." Then Abee Ja'far said to Ibn Ishaaq **"Compile a book for him which mentions the reports and information from the creation of Aadam (alayhi salaam) up until today."** Ibn Ishaaq wrote that and his book his narrated from him and was widely disseminated after him *(raheemahullaah)*. He is an Imaam of the *seerah* and compiled it with his hands, dispersed and it was based on information from those who came before him from the trustworthy successors. If the situation is like this, then the writings of Ibn Ishaaq do not actual exist in its complete form with us today, it is only actually found within the works and examination of Ibn Hishaam, the well-known scholar of the Arabic language. The soundness of this examination of Ibn Hishaam has been agreed upon by the scholars and that it is based upon the *seerah* of Ibn Ishaaq and what he narrated and authored. Yet it is not narrated directly from Ibn Ishaaq rather it is narrated from one of the trustworthy narrators who narrated from Ibn Ishaaq, this *seerah* is well known today as the *'Seerah of Ibn Hishaam.'* The authoring of works on the *seerah* developed amongst the people of knowledge, Ibn Hazm wrote a biography entitled *'Jawaami' as-Seerah'*, Ibn Sayyid an-Naas also authored a biography and scholars continued in authoring biographies, yet the most reliable of those mentioned is that of Ibn Hishaam from Ibn Ishaaq or they mention other works on the *maghaazee*. Likewise, those who gave importance in authoring works on the *seerah* include al-Waaqidee, some scholars praise him for his *maghaazee* and yet some scholars say that **"his works on maghaazee should be regarded as his affair in hadeeth, his hadeeth are not accepted."**[5] The *maghaazee* of al-Waaqidee does not exist with us today and many of the people of knowledge rely upon it and what is correct is that *al-Waaqidiyyah* is not totally verified in what has been transmitted and it is maybe the case that he obtained narrations and

[5] Waqidi died in 207 AH/823 CE. T.Khalidi mentioned in his book *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.48 that: **"Waqidi was attacked for loose isnad usage by strict practitioners of Hadith…"** [TN]

transmissions which are not known to the people of knowledge. Therefore, his *hadeeth* of the *maghaazee* which the people of knowledge reject are not accepted, especially that which differs from the basis of *usool* or opposes that which the speech of the people of knowledge indicates about *seerah*. Also from those who authored a biography is Ibn Sa'd the author of *at-Tabaqaat*, which is well known. These are from what is known as works and books on the biography (*seerah*) and the scholars regarded these works from the past until this era. There are also writings on the *seerah* that follow another method, and that is the method of the people of hadeeth, they are concerned with the *seerah* of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* and mentioning his conditions, military encounters and the likes based upon what the books of *hadeeth* have mentioned. So you find in the *Saheeh* of al-Bukhaaree *(raheemahullaah)* a book on the *maghaazee*, you will find that Imaam Muslim has a biography on the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*, you will also find likewise with Abee Daawood. Likewise, the people of *hadeeth* gave this importance in singular classifications and they mentioned their chains of transmission which relate to the *seerah*, noting that which is authentic and that which is rejected, as al-Haaifdh Zaynuddeen al-'Iraaqee noted: **"the student should know that the seerah combines that which is authentic and that which is not recognised."** Al-Bayhaqee classified the book *Dalaa'il un-Nubawwah*, Aboo Nu'aym al-Isfahaanee or al-Isbahaanee, Ahmad ibn 'Abdillaah, the well known scholar, classified *Dalaa'il un-Nubuwwah*, so the people of *hadeeth* take concern with the works of the *seerah* from two sides:

1. In their classifications from that which is authentic and chains of transmission that mention the *seerah*, which has been either arranged systematically or otherwise

2. And likewise that which they assign especially from works which have been abridged which mention the proofs of Prophethood (*Dalaa'il un-Nubuwwah*).

As we have mentioned, the books of the *seerah* are not concerned with authenticity, rather they mentioned within them that which has been transmitted in the *seerah*. This is why al-Haaifdh Zaynuddeen al-'Iraaqee said in what I mentioned to you **"the student should know that the seerah combines that which is authentic and that which is not recognised."** So within it is that which is authentic and that which is not recognised and rejected, this is a clear issue, for the *seerah* of Ibn Ishaaq for example includes much in the way of that which is authentic and much in the way of that which is rejected. All of this is from that which is well known about the sources of the *seerah*, so if this is the case then what is appropriate in verifying the position of *seerah* is to verify the sources of the *seerah* and extract the *seerah* according to the important principles, which is a question and answer, **"how do we extract the seerah safely?"** The answer is that the *seerah* of al-Mustphaa *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* should primarily be taken from the Qur'aan, as the Qur'aan mentions within it his life *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* when he was young,

[illegible]

"Did He not find you an orphan and give (you) refuge?"

{*adh-Dhuhaa (93): 6*}

And it also mentions his conditions *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* before being assigned to be a Prophet, it also mentions his Prophetic mission *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*, and it mentions the visit from the *jinn* when they listened to the Qur'aan, it mentions his conditions with the *mushrikeen* and his *da'wah* to

them, it mentions what took place during the *hijra*, then it mentions all of the military encounters, such as the Battle of Badr in *Soorah al-Anfaal* and the Battle of Uhud in *Soorah Aali-'Imraan*, the Battle of Khandaq and the confederate clans in *Soorah al-Ahzaab* and the conquest of Makkah and the Treaty of Hudaybiyah[6] in *Soorah al-Fath*, and the Battle of Hunayn and

[6] The *Hudaybiyah Treaty* was made between the Muslims and the polytheists of Quraysh. When the *mushrikeen* of Quraysh witnessed the determination of the Muslims to risk their lives, properties, wealth and families for their faith in order to spread it peacefully, they realised that the Prophet Muhammad *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* and his followers *(radi Allaahu 'anhum)* could not be bullied or frightened by mere scare tactics. Therefore, a treaty of reconciliation and peace was made between the Quraysh and the Muslims. The clauses of the treaty were:

- The Muslims would return and come back in the following year (7 AH) but they would not stay in Makkah for more than three days and without arms except those concealed.
- War activities were to be suspended for ten years, during which both sides will live in security with neither side waging war against the other.
- Whoever wishes to join Muhammad *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* was free to do so and likewise whoever wished to join the *mushrikeen* of the Quraysh was also free to do so.
- If anyone from the Quraysh joins Muhammad *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* without his parent's or guardian's permission, he should be sent back to the Quraysh, but should any of Muhammad's followers return to the Quraysh, he was not to be sent back. (Safiur-Rahman al-Mubarakpuri, *The Sealed Nectar (ar-Raheequl-Makhtum)* Darusalam, 2002, p.403)

The treaty was significant in that the Quraysh began to recognise the Muslims legitimate existence and began to deal with them on equal terms. Safiur-Rahman al-Mubarakpuri notes in his biography of the Prophet Muhammad *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* pp.407-408: "The Muslims did not have in mind to seize people's property or kill them through bloody wars, nor did they ever think of using any compulsive approaches in their efforts to propagate Islam, on the contrary their sole target was to provide an atmosphere of freedom in ideology or religion, **"Then whosoever wills, let him believe, and whosoever wills, let him disbelieve."** *{al-Kahf (18): 29}*" The Muslims on the other hand had the opportunity to spread Islaam over areas not then explored. When there was the peace agreement, war was abolished, and men met and consulted each other, none talked about Islaam intelligently without entering it; within two years following the conclusion of the treaty, twice as many people entered Islaam than ever before. This is supported by the fact that the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* went out to al-Hudaybiyah with only 1400 men, but when he set out to liberate Makkah, two years later, he had 10,000 men with him. [TN]

Tabook[7] in *Soorah al-Baraa'ah*[8] and what is besides. So if a student of knowledge combines what the commentators discussed from the

[7] The battle of Tabook took place in 9 AH/October 630 CE wherein the Messenger of Allaah *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* led an expedition into Roman/Byzantine territory before the Byzantine army entered Muslim territory. The expedition traversed through intense heat on a long journey to face the opposing enemy, in the meantime the hypocrites made a number of excuses not to go while the wealthy Muslims spent in the way of Allaah to support the expedition. The Muslim army included 30,000 men who set out from Madeenah which was the largest army to have set out on a military expedition. The armies passed through al-Hijr, where the former Thamood civilisation lived and the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* informed the companions that they were punished due to their sins. The Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* instructed the companions not to drink the water at al-Hijr and prayed to Allaah to bring them water, then a dark cloud came over them and poured forth rain, allowing the companions to quench their thirst and fill their water containers. When the Messenger of Allaah *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* reached Tabook, the Arab amirs on the herders called on him and made treaties of peace. They also paid to him the jizyah tax. The Messenger *(sallallahu alaiyhi wassallam)* of Allah guaranteed their borders, the security of their territories and their caravans and ships travelling by land and sea. Letters to this effect were delivered to all parties. The news came that the Romans had withdrawn from the border towns. They had decided not to encroach on Muslim land. The Prophet could see no reason to pursue them into their own territory as his goal had already been achieved.

He stayed at Tabook for about two weeks and then travelled back to Madeenah. Among those who had stayed behind at the time of this expedition were Ka'b ibn Maalik, Murarah ibn ar-Rabi' and Hilaal ibn Umayyah. They were among the first Muslims and had been thoroughly tested in Islam. Murarah ibn ar-Rabi' and Hilaal ibn Umayyah had been present at Badr and it was not their nature to not take part in the battle. The situation was only part of the Divine wisdom, so they would really examine themselves and be a lesson for all Muslims in the future. Such failings are usually because of procrastination, weakness and over-reliance on means. The Messenger of Allaah *(sallallahu alaiyhi wassallam)* forbade anyone to speak to them. All the Muslims obeyed him and people avoided them. They had to endure that trial for fifty days. Ka'b ibn Maalik would attend prayers with the Muslims and visit the markets but everyone ignored him. But his suffering only increased his faith in Islam. The wives of these three were also affected by the measures and no one was allowed to go near them either. A further test came when the influential King of Ghassan heard what was happening in Madeenah. He invited Ka'b ibn Maalik to his court in order to honour him and lure him from Islam. But when the King's messenger delivered the invitation to Ka'b he threw it into the fire. Allaah's examination was over and none of the three had failed the test. A revelation came from Allaah in *Soorah Tawbah* to illustrate how their example would hold for all time, They had not deserted their faith but had found refuge and safety with Allaah. The Tabook expedition was the last that the Messenger of Allaah took part in and in total there were twenty seven battles and sixty forays and

companions and those after them regarding these verses he will obtain a strong reliable source from the Qur'aan. A group of the people of knowledge worked hard in this regards however they did not gather, according to what I know, a complete compilation according to what the commentators of the Qur'aan mentioned; some of the contemporary scholars have tried this and strove hard in this field yet they did not collate all of the comments of the verifying scholars from the Qur'anic commentators upon the relevant verses. Therefore, what is a must within the *seerah* is to rely upon what the Qur'aan mentions in regards to it and what the commentators of the Qur'aan have noted with regards to such verses that relate to the *seerah* of al-Mustaphaa *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*.

The second source is the authentic *hadeeth* especially that which is within the two *Saheehs* (of Bukhaaree and Muslim) or that which has been authenticated in other than these two *hadeeth* collections, which mention the hadeeth regarding the *seerah* of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*. If these hadeeth are coupled with that which is mentioned in the books of the *seerah*, we find that some of what has been transmitted in the books of *seerah* is not

expeditions which was all achieved with as little loss of life than has ever been seen in world history. The exact number of Muslims who took part in the battle of Tabook is not mentioned in any reliable account. Ibn Hajar has stated, with reference to some narratives of *Fath al-Baaree* mentioned in connection with the biography of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* and the wars he had fought in the way of Allah, that they numbered thirty to forty thousand men. Although these figures are open to question but one can safely infer from these figures that their number was very large. According to Saheeh al-Bukhaaree: "A large number of Muslims participated with the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* in this war. Their number was so large that they could not be described in a register. It was difficult for the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* to discover who was absent except that he was informed about him by Allah." (*Saheeh al-Bukhaaree, Kitaab al-Maghazi, Bab Ghazwah Tabook, Hadeeth Ka`b bin Maalik*). This extract goes to prove that although the number of Muslims who took part in this war was very large, the provisions weighing a few seers only sufficed for them all. Tabook is in northwestern Saudi Arabia, very close to the border with Jordan.

[8] This means disassociation, freedom, release or immunity, the *soorah* is also known as *soorah at-Tawbah* and the words *'Bismillaah ir-Rahmaan ir-Raheem'* were not revealed at the beginning of it. [TN]

authenticated. For example, some of the history in regards to some of the battles, conditions, and (things which have been mentioned about) the story of *al-Israa wa'l-Mi'raaj*. The second reliable source after the Book of Allaah and its explanation is that we look to the hadeeth which have not been mentioned in the Book of Allaah, *Most Glorious* and *Most High*, and what the companions and successors relied upon in what they explained from the verses of the Qur'aan upon the methodology of the *Salaf* in *tafseer* of the Qur'aan with the *sunnah*. Therefore, reliance upon what is within the authentic books and the books of hadeeth as sources of the *seerah* is primary and further away from confusion and what is not authentic within the *seerah*. For this reason, many of the people of knowledge called to authoring authentic Prophetic biographies, some of the contemporaries have attempted to do this but they found a huge mountain in front of them to climb, as this affair requires knowledge of the hadeeth and chains of transmission and knowledge of *tafseer*, language, the books of *sunnah*, the books of *'aqeedah* and other than this from what has been left off by those who authored *seerah* beforehand.

Also from the sources (of the *seerah*) that are relied upon, are books of *seerah* as we have mentioned and books of history. We find for example, that the history of Ibn Jareer relates much of the *seerah* of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* with the chains of transmission. However, this has been taken from that which is not in the Qur'aan and its explanation, nor what has been verified in the *sunnah* of al-Mustaphaa *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*. So if we do not find an incident in the Book or in the *sunnah*, the books of *seerah* can be take from, and there is no problem in that as it is of a higher level by agreement, the narrations of *Bani Israa'eel*. The Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* said to us *"Narrate from the Bani Israa'eel and there is no blame."* So if it is in the books of *seerah* and does not oppose the Book and *sunnah*

then there is no problem in utilising it and relying upon what is within it and the people of knowledge did this. Thus we see that Ibn Katheer *(raheemahullaah)* in the beginning of his book *al-Bidayaah wa'n-Nihaayah* wrote a long *seerah* of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* which is in four volumes and combined within it that which has been mentioned by the people of *seerah* and that which has been mentioned by the people of hadeeth and what has come in the verses of the Qur'aan, yet this also requires some increased inspection.

Therefore, these are the general sources of the *seerah* and if this is made clear then what can be observed is that the people of *hadeeth*, the people of *athaar* (narration) who are adhered to the *salaf* of this *ummah*, are the ones who attach importance to the *seerah* of al-Mustaphaa *(sallallaahu alayhi wassalam)*. Some of the people say **"Those who are concerned with the hadeeth and narrations who adhere to the way of the Salaf, do not having any concern with the seerah!"** This is incorrect, rather those who are concerned with the *seerah* of al-Mustaphaa *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* from the point of verification, selection, understanding and evidences, are the followers of the *salaf* of this *ummah*. If there is any difficulty from one who adheres to the hadeeth and narrations, then this requires a remedy, as concern with the *seerah* has with it that which a person, a believer or a student of knowledge can obtain, from different types of sciences and benefits, which cannot be obtained except by reading the *seerah*. It also places pride in the heart for the *deen* of Allaah and happiness with the victory of the *deen* during the first affair and love will thus be placed in the heart for the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* and his companions, thus increasing the believer in their guidance.

We find that the Imaams of this *da'wah*, such as the Imaam and the *mujaddid*, Shaykh ul-Islaam Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhaab *(raheemahullaah)* attached importance to the *seerah* and authored a book on the *seerah* of Mustaphaa *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*, which has been published and is present. Also his son, the Imaam, Shaykh 'Abdullaah ibn Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhaab, has a book also on the *seerah* of al-Mustaphaa *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*. They mention in their biographies a number of benefits to be extracted from the *seerah*, particularly benefits related to *da'wah*, a mention of the benefits related to *da'wah* from the *seerah* of Mustaphaa *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* will soon come. Therefore, the concern with the *seerah*, is verified, understood and deduced and is what our scholars were upon. Attaching importance to the *seerah* is a characteristic of the students of knowledge, the serious students, and is a characteristic of those who generally love that which is good. It softens the people's hearts and puts ambition into their souls and places honour into their souls. From that, is the mention of stories from the *seerah* and the accounts of events and rulings that happened within them.

The views of the people and authors, and of those who study the *seerah*, are various, it is possible to name this or entitled this as **'Schools of Thought for Understanding the Seerah of the Prophet, upon him be prayers and peace.'** As the *seerah* of Mustaphaa *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* has various schools of thought who attempt to understand it, author about it and research the importance of it. Now to some of these schools of thought which attempt to understand the *seerah*:

FIRST SCHOOL OF UNDERSTANDING:

The first of such schools of understanding is the linguistic school of understanding. The adherents of this school understand the *seerah* by attaching importance to what is in the *seerah* via the correct language. As whoever transmits the *seerah*, such as the successors, such as Ibn Ishaaq, transmitted it by correct language and what is present in the *seerah* from information, reports, sermons to the Arabs, stories, sermons to the *sahaabah*, and sayings about this, then all of this is from the view of language and is reliable. So for this reason, Ibn Hishaam *(raheemahuallah)* attached importance to the *seerah* of Ibn Ishaaq, he (Ibn Hishaam) was an Arabic linguist and was firmly grounded in Arabic and attached importance to what Ibn Ishaaq mentioned in his *seerah*, and then mentioned this information in the abridgment to his *seerah*, *'The Seerah of Ibn Hishaam'*, and mentioned in it what agrees with, and what should not be taken and left of such things from it. He then published it along with an explanation of any strange issues that may have arisen with concern over such matters. Likewise, the *seerah* of Ibn Hishaam has been comprehended by those scholars, who are focused on attaching importance to the *seerah* via assessing the language, by explanation and the basis of their aims is to attach importance to the language. Such as al-Haafidh as-Suhaylee who authored *ar-Rawdh al-Unuf* which was an explanation of the *seerah* of Ibn Hishaam and al-Haafidh Abee Dharr al-Khushanee in his explanation *Ghareeb us-Seerah* and both of these works have been printed and published. The work of al-Haafidh as-Suhaylee is large and as for the work of Abee Dharr al-Khushanee then it is only in one volume. With this type of concern you will find that many of those who value literature and language are interested in the *seerah*, so it is necessary to make a distinction when looking at a literary work of *seerah* with the categorisation (i.e. school of thought) of the literary work. So if you know that the author

is from the category of the linguist and that his main concern is with assessing language then you will be able to research for what you are looking for from the mentioning of the *ghareeb* in the *seerah* and what is similar to such matters, as such an author attaches particular concern to that as opposed to others within the sciences of *seerah*.

Literary authors also attach importance to the *seerah* and some of the contemporary writers from different countries have authored works on the *seerah*. You will find that most of them are literary writers and this is the habit of literary authors as within the *seerah* is raising the revenue of literature and great prose. Many of such literary writers have authored works regarding the *seerah* and have transmitted the *seerah* accordingly, to the method of the literary writer. This school of thought has extensive explanations of it which mention is positive aspects and its defects.

SECOND SCHOOL OF UNDERSTANDING:

The second school of understanding of the *seerah* is the school of the Arab nationalists. Those who attach importance to the Arabs and have partisanship to being Arab and partisanship to 'Arab honour', view that the 'glorious' of those who were before them, as they claim, wrote biographies of themselves. They also claim that the glory of the Arabs did not begin except by the coming of Muhammad *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* and that with him is upliftment of the Arabs and that also with him *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* the Arabs were raised to their peak. As Allaah says,

< وَإِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ >

"And indeed, it is a remembrance for you and you people…"

{*az-Zukhruf (43): 44*}

And with this is raising the light of the Arabs, so they understood the *seerah* and authored regarding it from the perspective that all of the civilised nations, such as the ancient Greeks, the ancient Persians, the ancient Romans etc. all had biographies of their great personalities in the form of literary works and the intent of this was to exalt their honour. Therefore, many of the contemporaries and those from the past have understood the *seerah* to be upliftment of the honour of the Arabs and to raise the Arabs over others. Within this are many other different schools of thought such as the school of TaHa Hussein[9] and others like him from those who have

[9] Taha Husain (1889 – 1973 CE) the famous Egyptian writer who was blind from youth and had memorised the whole Qur'aan. He later began to question Islaam and authored many books among them *al-Ayyaam* and *fee Sh'ir il-Jaahiliyyah* in which he criticised the authenticity of the Qur'aan and questioned other aspects of Islaam. In his other works he mocks the Prophets and questions their message, deeming them as only being sent for their people. Others similar include:

1. The Iraanian Ali Dashti, his book entitled *23 Years* is actually used by Christian evangelical missionaries who idiotically refer to him as being a "Islamic scholar" or a "Muslim scholar", in order to discredit the Qur'aan. Dashti embraced the *Deen* of Marxist-Socialism and thus interprets Islaam accordingly, on page 8 of *23 Years* for example he compares the Prophet Muhammad *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* to Lenin?! He ridiculed the *hadeeth* literature for being biased and unreliable, yet when it suited him referred to *hadeeth* to support his claims! Dashti was entranced by the West which he deemed as superior and thus blindly followed the theories of Marxism and feebly attempted to apply them to the life of the Prophet Muhammad *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallaam)*. Furthermore, Dashti was a Persian speaker not an Arabic speaker and he definitely was not an expert in Arabic grammar, prose, morphology or syntax. Therefore, Dashti was not an authority to give a 'critique' from his own desires on the Arabic literary style of the Qur'aan. Dashti's case demonstrates that he was brought up as a *Shee'ee* and thus with a lack of knowledge himself about Islaam, as a result his writings give the sense of a confused individual. In fact most of those who become apostates from Islaam are either those who were raised with little Islamic education or knowledge or were raised within the heretical *Shee'ah* traditions!
2. Also, Nasr Abu Zaid, who was declared an apostate by an Egyptian court in 1993 and thus his marriage was deemed as being invalid. Abu Zaid's deviation began after studying the works of the *Mu'tazilah* and then later the writings of the heretical non-Muslim mystic, Ibn 'Arabee. He was an assistant Professor of Arabic at *Cairo University* and his attacks on the Qur'aan and *Sunnah* were simplistically held up by *Kuffaar* as being a mere example of his "modern education and rational thought". Abu Zayd employed a rationalist interpretation of the

written on the *seerah*, as they do not write on the *seerah* in order to give victory to the *deen* of Muhammad *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* rather they author on the *seerah* with the view of (giving importance to) the Arab race. Indeed, they are as TaHa Hussein mentioned in his introduction to his book *'ala Haamish is-Seerah* wherein he mentioned that **"this seerah…"** that he wrote, **"includes things which the intellect cannot accept and that the soul cannot accept however the people need such superstitions in their lives and hadeeth, which make it easier for them to accept things."** Meaning: they are mere stories and fables which have neither a basis (to his distorted idea of 'intellect') nor importance. He mentioned in the introduction to his book that he researched according to this understanding and that he found that the ancient Greeks and the ancient Persians had great personalities whom they had mentioned in their histories and viewed that it is necessary to have such a category of *seerah* and to author according to it. Therefore, when looking at the works of an author it is necessary to also look at the category of school of understanding that he belongs to prior and from which school of understanding the *seerah* he belongs to. As if the people read a book from a person who is from the Arab nationalist school of understanding maybe they will be affected by a type of defect in comprehending the *seerah* of the Prophet *(sallallaahu aalyhi wassallam)*, rather it may even be the case that he will not believe in the miracles of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* or in his signs and

Qur'aan and *Sunnah* and thus denied many of the miracles mentioned, claiming that they had to be understood in their socio-cultural and historical contexts!? Him and his wife fled to Scandinavia.

3. Dr Khalid Abou Fadl, a professor at *Yale University* in the US has questioned the character of the companion Aboo Hurayrah *(radi Allaahu anhu)* and has initiated other attacks upon the *Sunnah* and those who follow it.
4. Also the Moroccan Fatima Mernissi, who also throws doubts on the *Sunnah* and Aboo Hurayrah *(radi Allaahu 'anhu)* and calls for Western feminism.

evidences considering them to be mere stories and fables which do not have any relevance to the 'reality' or 'current situation,' as is said.

THIRD SCHOOL OF UNDERSTANDING:

The third school of understanding which are concerned with the *seerah* is that of the scholars, jurists and scholars of *hadeeth* who attach much importance to the *seerah*. They thus author on the *seerah* placing particular importance on issues related to rulings, explanations of matters of *'aqeedah*, explanations of rulings of *fiqh* that are to be found within the *seerah*. This is manifest to you in the example of those who attach importance to it such as the Imaams of *hadeeth* such as al-Bukhaaree and others and the Imaams of *hadeeth* after him such as al-Haafidh al-Bayhaqee in *ad-Dalaa'il un-Nubuwwah* and likewise those who came after them such as Shaykh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah, as he viewed the *seerah* from a *fiqh* perspective and his speech was explained and differentiated into speech on *seerah* by al-'Allaamah, Shamsuddeen Ibn ul-Qayyim in his book *Zaad ul-Ma'ad fee Hadyi-l'Khayr il-'Ibaad*.[10] He understood the *seerah* by mentioning the verification within it and compiled a *seerah* in light of what is mentioned in the Qur'aan, *sunnah* and the comments of the people of *seerah* and viewed it from the perspective of *fiqh* and belief. Those who followed him in applying this method were the Imaam and *Mujaddid* Shaykhul-Islaam Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhaab and his son and student 'Abdullaah ibn Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhaab. They authored on the *seerah* in view of Islamic knowledge and combined between the *seerah*, stories and knowledge. There is no doubt that this school of

[10] This has been translated into English by Jalal Abualrub, edited by Alan Mencke & Shaheed M. Ali (Orlando: Madinah Publishers, 2000 CE).

understanding is the greatest of the schools for understanding the *seerah* and the most beneficial, as will be made clear *inshaa'Allaah*.[11]

FOURTH SCHOOL OF UNDERSTANDING:

The fourth school of understanding is that of the modernist school of thought. The modernists from the *du'aat* (callers to Islaam) according to their different views on *da'wah* have an interest in the *seerah* for different reasons. They place importance to the *seerah* in order to find a basis for their own propagation that they are interested in and for what the groups that are attached to them are interested in. Within the *seerah* is that which is not possible for them to extract mere evidences for the many issues of *da'wah*, this can be a correct deduction or it could be an error. Thus, a large school of understanding has emerged in this era which writes on the *seerah* and writes on lessons and examples to be extracted from the *seerah* and studies from the *seerah*, for the different schools of understanding *da'wah*. Many of these do not pay any concern to what is authentic and unauthentic within the *seerah* rather they make the *seerah* an example for what they want from the benefits of *da'wah* whether it be authentic or unauthentic and whether it is verified according to Islamic knowledge, *fiqh* and *'aqeedah* or is not verified. For this reason many books seek to understand the *seerah* according to this comprehension and this is one of the schools of understanding the *seerah*, it is possible for it to be entitled the **'School of Contemporary Da'wah for Understanding the Seerah.'**[12]

[11] A good example of this checking of historical narrations in accordance with the precise criteria of the scholars of hadeeth can be seen with Dr. Akram Diyaa' al-'Umaraee's work entitled *'Asru Khulafaa Raashideen* (Riyadh: Maktabah 'Ubaykaan, 1422 AH/2001 CE). [TN]

[12] A clear example of this is with the likes of 'Amr Khaalid and Taariq Swaydaan who both utilise much in the way of that which is inauthentic or according to their own theories in order to interpret the *seerah* and *ahadeeth*. [TN]

FIFTH SCHOOL OF UNDERSTANDING:

The fifth school of understanding is that of narrations and stories, as many of those who preceded and those in this era understand the *seerah* as being narrations and stories, rather they may even understand a page, or two pages, on the *seerah* as being but an explanation or a literary excursion and thus made it ten or twenty pages all for digression. They thus turned the *seerah* into various mere stories in order for it to be an admonition for whoever reads it. Many have therefore emerged from those who defend Islaam, those of *deen* and goodness, who oppose the huge mass of narrations, stories and fables and some of this has been translated. They opposed it with transmitting the *seerah* via stories and narrations, there is no doubt that this has some benefit however it also has its negative aspects even though it is used as an understanding by some of the students of knowledge who know the limits of what Allaah revealed to His Messenger, they wrote it according to the form of stories and narrations, in which there is no problem, however it must be reliable and in accordance to what the knowledge indicates and it must also be verified, as within it is much benefit to the youth and adults also.

These are all of the schools of thought for understanding the *seerah*, past and present.

If we look at the *seerah*, meaning: what has been written in the books of *seerah* from the reports of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* and stories and what happened to him *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*, we find that the *seerah* infers (is in accordance with) certain events that are affairs that the scholars of the *salaf* and the verifiers from the people of knowledge after them, have viewed as not being sound conclusions and may actually be void, and may actually be *shirk*. This takes us to explanation of this type, which can be

called **'Types of Erroneous Deductions from Events from the Seerah.'** This has been highlighted by some of the full-time students of knowledge who have combined the erroneous deductions in light of what has been transmitted in the *seerah* upon affairs which are not established on sound knowledge and which has not been stated by the Imaams or the scholars. So from this for example, which is found in the books of *seerah* is that the Muslims during the Battle of Yamaamah used 'Muhammada' as a symbol. This was mentioned by at-Tabaree and Ibn Katheer in *al-Bidaayah wa'n-Nihaayah* and works similar to these. They said that it was said that this indicates the permissibility of seeking help with the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* after his death as the meaning of 'Muhammada' is 'O Muhammad (Yaa Muhammad)' or a call unto him *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*. There is no doubt that making inferences from issues related to *'aqeedah*, indeed upon issues that are at the core of *tawheed,* the origin of which is seeking assistance from only Allaah without partners, such as by inferring that seeking help by the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* by calling upon him is permissible, disregards much of the tests of the Qur'aan and *sunnah* that have multiple transmissions, linguistically and in meaning. It disregards all of these authentic texts due to a report from the books of the *seerah* and it is used as evidence by some deviants and by some callers of innovation and misguidance. There is no doubt that this is a result from thinking that everything that is mentioned in the books of *seerah* and what is mentioned in the *seerah* of the companions *(radi Allaahu 'anhum)* is intrinsically authentic, and this is a mistake. As there are things that have been ascribed to them which are not authentic and are in fact mistakes in *tawheed*, mistakes in *'aqeedah* and mistakes in the *sunnah*, such as with the example that I have just mentioned to you. So if we look at the *Tareekh* of Tabaree wherein things are mentioned with their chains of transmission, we will find that the chain of transmission of a story that has been mentioned in it has been reported

by one who is a liar *(kadhaab)*, unknown *(majhool)* and weak *(da'eef)*, this is sufficient in rendering such a story or report as being invalid. The one who therefore knows the *deen* of the Messenger *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* has made such a story invalid without even looking at the chain of transmission *(isnad)* as the companions did not seek help by calling out to anyone other than their Lord, *Glorious and Most High*! Meaning: they did not seek help by calling out to one who is not able to help them and they are the best of the *ummah* and they did not seek help by calling on the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* after his death. This is an example of how erroneous deductions related to *'aqeedah* can be drawn from some of the things that are mentioned in the books of *seerah*, the books of *maghaazee* and the books on the companions *(radi Allaahu 'anhum)*. Also from the mistakes regarding things that are mentioned in the *seerah* is the dissemination of weak *hadeeth* being spread amongst the people, which are not authentically reported from the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* and may even be *ahaadeeth* that are rejected and void, have been included in the books of *seerah*. I have already noted to you the statement of al-Haafidh al-'Iraaqee: **"the student should know that the seerah combines that which is authentic and that which is not recognised."** So within the *seerah* is that which is not recognised and is rejected of which the people of knowledge are aware. From that for example, are the many stories of the bishop Baheerah, the origin of the story is sound yet in regards to the chains of transmission and narration of that which is mentioned in the *seerah* then the additional explanations are not verified and have been conveyed with no chain of transmission. The origin of the story is sound and in many lectures, some callers, preachers and people of give *khutbahs* say that it is authentic however it is not totally authentic. Some of the enemies of Islaam from the Orientalists and others rely on these accounts of Baheerah and thus conclude that the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* took much in the way of knowledge from the

priest Baheerah and then mentioned what he learnt to his companions, and this is erroneous and invalid.[13] An example of this is the famous story when the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* when the man mentioned his intention to kill the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* and this is a report which has been weakened by a number of the people of knowledge. This type of error in taking *ahaadeeth* found in the *seerah* to be correct has been brought to attention by the people of knowledge such as *al-'Allaamah* al-Albaanee in his book *ad-Difa' 'an al-Hadeeth in-Nabawee wa's-Seerah* and it is a good book which mentions many of the things that are mentioned in the *seerah* which are not authentic accounts and the book also challenges al-Bootee and the things that are in his book *Fiqh us-Seerah*. Likewise, there is what he (i.e. Imaam al-Albaanee) has appended to *Fiqh us-Seerah* of al-Ghazaalee the contemporary wherein he highlighted and derived rulings and checked many of the *ahaadeeth*, other than him (i.e. Imaam al-Albaanee) from the youth and the students of knowledge have also written books checking and verifying the hadeeth found in the *seerah*. The intent of all of this is to draw attention to the fact that *ahaadeeth* found in books of *seerah* may be authentic and if scholars discuss if these *ahaadeeth* are to accepted then they discuss them totally, but if it is due to attempting to derive inferences or objections then the scholars do not want this, rather they discuss what the foremost scholars have noted regarding such *ahaadeeth*.

Also there are types of issues related to *fiqh* which are based upon incidents that are mentioned in the *seerah*, yet incidents found in the *seerah* are not in

[13] These deceptive arguments have been thoroughly refuted by Muslims in the English language, see for example Muhammad Mohar Ali, *Sirat an-Nabi and the Orientalists* (Madinah: King Fahd Complex, 1997) and Jabal Muhammad Buaben, *The Image of the Prophet Muhammad in the West – A Study of Muir, Margoliouth and Watt* (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1996 CE). Also refer to the through, precise and detailed refutations of Orientalist arguments and Christian missionary propaganda by MSM Saifullaah and his team at the *Islamic Awareness* website. For example, see *The Orientalists, The Bible and The Qur'an – A Brief Review of Bible Borrowing Theories*. [TN]

themselves proofs for issues of *fiqh* until such incidents have been verified either via the Qur'aan or via that which has been verified in the *sunnah* or what has been mentioned by the companions in their commentaries on the Qur'aan and their explanations of the *sunnah* regarding such incidents. For this reason, we find that many take some incidents from the *seerah* in order to extract *fiqh* benefits from them yet in reality these regulations that they have extracted are errors, as the evidence for it (the *fiqh* ruling) is not authentic to be taken as a proof. It may be weak, indefinite, invalid, void and so on. Ibn Qayyim *(raheemahullaah)* paid much attention to this in his book *Za'd al-Ma'ad* wherein he mentioned the *seerah* of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* and carefully checked certain incidents mentioned in the *seerah* that were said to have occurred in Makkah or during the military expeditions, and he elucidated the correct authentic narrations in regards to *fiqh* and the *fiqh* benefits to be extracted, the book in itself is for this very reason.

Also from the errors in studying the *seerah*, which the callers to innovation and those who give no concern to knowledge yet attach themselves to *da'wah* err in, is that they base issues of *da'wah* on the *seerah*. As a result, they do not look at what is present in the texts or what the people of knowledge have stated in regards to such issues. For example, some of them deduce from the incident of Sa'd ibn Abee Waqqaas *(radi Allaahu 'anhu)*[14] when he

[14] He is Sa'd ibn Maalik az-Zuhahyree, better known as Sa'd ibn Abee Waqqaas *(radi Allaahu 'anhu)* was one of the first people to accept Islaam, accepting Islaam when he was 17 years old and he was one of the ten whom the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* promised Paradise. His grandfather was Uhayb ibn Manaaf, the paternal uncle of Ameenah, the mother of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* He was a skilled horseman and archer, participating in many of the battles and military expeditions and is noted for his contribution during the battles of Badr and Uhud. He was one of the six members of the *Shoora* counsel which 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab *(radi Allaahu 'anhu)* chose to appoint the *Khaleefah* after 'Umar was stabbed. Sa'd ibn Abee Waqqaas *(radi Allaahu 'anhu)* was the first to shoot an arrow at the *mushrikeen* in *jihaad* and he led the Muslims in taking over 'Iraaq from the Persians

threw a stone which hit a *mushrik* in the face in Makkah, and as a result of this story some of them say that this is an evidence for assassination operations and take this as an proof in their research on the permissibility of assassination plots. There is no doubt that this is not the correct and authentic methodology of knowledge wherein incidents of the *seerah* are taken for the basis of knowledge, as it needs to be taken from that which is authentic from the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* or authentically reported from his companions *(radi Allaahu 'anhum)* and determined by the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* during his lifetime. Another example is what some of them mention is that the youth who gathered in the Masjid of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* in order to hear his opinion about the Battle of Badr is an evidence for the permissibility of staging sit-ins within *masaajid* and demonstrations. There is no doubt that this is against the correct Islamic precise methodology and mere searching for a way out to establish an evidence between a worshipper and his Lord. A further example of this is what is found in some of the books of *seerah* regarding the secrecy between the companions which some use to prove secrecy in giving *da'wah* and that such secrecy is the foundation of *da'wah* and organising *da'wah*, and if this is assessed with correct knowledge, the speech of the people of knowledge and the scholars who can verify it will emerge that this (such secrecy amongst the companions) is not a proof for such a method of *da'wah*, as secrecy in an issue does not indicate secrecy in everything. The explanation of this is well known in the speech of the people of knowledge such as Ibn ul-Qayyim and others. Likewise from the issues related to *da'wah* that have been based from the books of *seerah* is that some groups explain that the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* gave *da'wah* in Makkah for thirteen years which thus indicates, according to them, that *da'wah* has to be

after defeating them in the battle of *al-Qaadisiyyah* in the 15th year after the *Hijrah* (corresponding to 634 CE). He died in 55 AH (circa 675 CE). See ath-Thahabee, *Tahtheeb Siyaar 'A'lam an-Nubala*, vol.1, no.5. [TN]

in secret as it was during the Makkan period along with all of the legislations during the Makkan period and that *da'wah* has to be for a period of thirteen years, as some groups have actually stated in some of the Islamic countries. They thus divided *da'wah* to be in the Makkan period and in the Madeenah period, when this idea developed from them and their respective party developed due to this, when thirteen years passed by without any empowerment for them they said **"this empowerment was achieved by the Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wassallam) after thirteen years as he was al-Mustaphaa (sallallaahu alayhi wassallam). So if we do not achieve empowerment we will then repeat thirteen years, and if after that we do not achieve empowerment, we will again repeat thirteen years"** (!!) and this demonstrates deviation in extracting evidences which is clearly apparent to everyone who has an intellect not to mention to ones who attach themselves to Islamic knowledge! Likewise some of them extract from the *seerah* stages of *da'wah* and make the society in which they live in to be the same as Makkan society during the time of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*. Thereby making the people feel as if they are living in isolation, as some of the extremist groups do, and consider the people to be *mushrikoon* or are pausing in their affairs as *Jamaa'at ut-Tawaqquf wa't-Tabayyun*[15] and their likes say. This is from the major errors, they made a number of deductions, however merely finding and holding onto a deduction is not the criteria rather the criteria is whether the evidence is authentic and if the deduction is sound and as for extracting erroneous rulings from a type of deduction then this can even lead to disbelief in the Divine Legislation. For example, some even try to say that alcohol is not prohibited in the Divine Legislation as Allaah did not say that it is *haraam* he only said

[15] An Egyptian founded extremist group which made *takfeer* of the society and also targeted non-Islamic banks, tourist resorts, bars, hotels etc. [TN]

"So avoid it in order that you will be successful."

{*al-Maa'idah (5): 90*}

…and that this is a warning and not a prohibition. Therefore, the student of *seerah* must refer what he comes across to the people of knowledge, if he is not a student of knowledge or a scholar in order to assess if a conclusion is correct or not, does Islamic knowledge agree with a deduction or not? Whether it is regards to issues of *'aqeedah*, issues of the *sunnah* and innovations, issues related to weak and authentic *hadeeth* or issues related to *fiqh* and regulations, issues related to *da'wah*. As we will not establish the *deen* or reach strength in *da'wah* except with cleansing our *manhaj* when extracting and deducing proofs and evidences. So if the *manhaj* in referring back when extracting and deducing proofs and evidences is clear, our society, callers, people who attach themselves to Islaam and the whole *ummah* will be strong as the sources and the statements from the people of knowledge who verify will be united in the principles of the Divine Legislation and the principles of extracting evidences in *'aqeedah*, regulations, lessons and examples.

If this becomes clear to you, we find that some of those who oppose the Divine Legislation and the *deen* from the secularists, socialists and their likes find within the *seerah* that which they can extract for their ways. The socialists say that their socialism can be deduced from the *seerah* such as allowing wealth to be distributed for all, and even allowing women to be distributed for all (!), via their use of the stories of the Prophet's *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* joining in brotherhood of the *Muhaajireen* and *Ansaar*. As a man would inherit from one who was his brother, not his blood-brother but his brother in *deen* who had been joined in brotherhood to another man by

the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*. So they inherited from each other until the saying of Allaah was revealed,

"But kindred of blood are nearer to one another (regarding inheritance) in the decree ordained by Allaah."

{*al-Anfaal (8): 75*}

So they use as a proof for their socialism with regards to wealth that this is the foundation of socialism which the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* called to. Some of them also utilise as proofs the presence of women's participation during warfare with the companions from the aspect of nursing as being the foundation of free-mixing between the sexes. What they (i.e. the socialists) intend is the prohibited free-mixing and that there is no problem with a woman working alongside a man within any sphere, whether it may be in the medical or nursing fields or any other field. They thus found within some incidents a doorway to this by taking from certain incidents and deliberating upon them and making themselves *faqeehs* even if the person does not have any authority in Islaam whatsoever!

Therefore, the *seerah* are stories, information and narratives and as a result deriving evidences cannot be formed by totally accepting what is found in the *seerah* until such evidence has been verified as being authentic and then viewed from the aspect of deduction. If we have reached this stage then there are certain sections that I will discard due to the time and this issue in reality is very important and needs further elucidation. However, we will come to the end of the matter by mentioning the topic of this lecture and a conclusion of what has been mentioned prior along with understanding the

principles which are necessary for us to acquire in accepting the *seerah* and for deduction and understanding.

1. The first of these principles is to arrange the strength of the sources on three ranks. The first rank is the Glorious Qur'aan, so whatever the Qur'aan indicates is foremost to anything else. Then the *sunnah* of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* which clarifies what is in the Qur'aan. The *sunnah* is that which is verified to have been practised by the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* whether that is via *ahad* (single) *hadeeth* narrations or *mutawattir* (multiple) hadeeth narrations, and whether the chains of transmission are *saheeh* or *hasan*, so if a hadeeth is verified then it can be taken in *seerah* and is foremost than anything else (after the Qur'aan). What also follows is taking from the *tafaaseer* (explanations) of the people of knowledge from the companions and those after them of the verses of the Qur'aan or hadeeth from the *sunnah*, as they largely explained the Qur'aan based upon their knowledge of the *sunnah* of al-Mustaphaa *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*. The third rank is what has arrived in the books of the *seerah* and if we find something in the books of *seerah* which does not oppose the Book and the *sunnah* then we are able to take it without refuting it as it does not oppose the Qur'aan and *sunnah* especially if the scholars have agreed upon its verification. As a result, there is no blame upon us if we accept it as some of the people of knowledge have stated that there is no doubt that the *seerah* can be verified more strongly from the narrations of the Children of Israa'eel and the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* gave us a concession to take from the narrations of the Children of Israa'eel saying *"…narrate from the*

Children of Israa'eel without blame…"[16] so we do not accept their narrations and neither do we disregard them and as for what is related in the *seerah* which does not oppose the text of the Qur'aan or the *sunnah* of 'Adnaan *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* then there is no problem in accepting such narrations as the scholars have noted that they can be accepted as long as they do not conflict with what is in the Book and the *sunnah* in the principles and branches of *seerah*. This is the first principle.

2. The second principle in understanding, reading and assessing the *seerah* is that benefits can be derived from the *seerah*, such as benefits related to *da'wah*, *eemaan* and knowledge. So it is incumbent on whoever reads the *seerah,* or mentions what which are found within it, to pay particular attention to the presence of all issues that have their own place. So if a story highlights a battle or what happened to the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* and his companions, the intent from it is to strengthen *eemaan* in the heart, love of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* and strengthen honour in the hearts of the people of *eemaan* and their connection to the *seerah* of al-Mustaphaa *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*, then there is no problem in this and accepting the *seerah* due to this in view of the first principle which we have seen. Then if something is found in the *seerah* which opposes what the people of knowledge have ruled upon in regards to *tawheed*, *tafseer* of the Qur'aan, the *sunnah*, *da'wah*, *fiqh* rulings and regulations, then there must be clarification so that a story which may have a

[16] Bukhaaree. The full text of the hadeeth is that the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* said: *"Spread knowledge from me, even if it is a sentence (i.e. a verse of the Qur'aan or hadeeth) and narrate from the Children of Israa'eel without blame, but whoever intentionally forges a lie upon me, then let him prepare is place of residence in Hell."* Which indicates that Judeao-Christian narratives can be accepted. For more on this see Abu Ammaar Yasir Qadhi, *An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur'aan* (Birmingham: Al-Hidaayah, 1420 AH/1999 CE, pp.317-320). [TN]

problem or rejected issue in it, in regards to the Divine Legislation, is not formulated. The second aspect of this principle is concern for *fiqh* issues and knowledge, viewing the *seerah* with a eye for knowledge which can be extracted from it, meaning for example when a student of knowledge assesses the *seerah* not on the mere basis that it is a narration or story, but rather the student takes it on the basis of the benefits which can be extracted in regards to *fiqh* regulations. Take for example the story or Battle of Hudaybiyah, or rather indeed the conquest of Hudaybiyah, Ibn Qayyim *(raheemahullaah)* extracted a number of benefits from this incident, benefits related to *fiqh* such as acts of worship, social interactions, even indeed issues that are connected to the Islamic state and the people in authority, kingship and conditions that fascinated him. This is no doubt from a great *fiqh* view which is incumbent for a student of knowledge to analyse.

3. The third principle for assessing the *seerah* is that the *seerah* of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* distinguishes *tawheed* from *shirk* and his *seerah (sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* was not the *seerah* of a mere leader of a political party or one who sought power or anything of the sort. Rather, his *seerah* manifests the great issue, indeed the greatest issue and the greatest thing to be sought, which is *tawheed* of Allaah. For this reason, you see that the verifying scholars who are concerned with attaching importance to the issue of *tawheed* such as Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim, Imaam Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhaab and those after him, looked at the *seerah* and the incidents that took place in it and attached it to the battlefield between *tawheed* and *shirk*. For this reason, whoever looks at the book of *seerah* by Imaam Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhaab, the book of *seerah* of 'Abdillaah the son of the Imaam *(raheemahumullaah)* will see that they are beneficial in regards to the battleground between *tawheed* and *shirk*. This is a

correct deduction because it is based upon a deduction with regards to application, which is the reality which was between the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* and his companions. The people who look at the *seerah* are agreed upon this battleground between the caller to Allaah, rather indeed of the leader of the *du'aat*, rather indeed the leader of the those who were sent *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* and between the *mushrikeen*, those *kuffaar* who are obstinate towards Allaah and to His Messenger *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*. Allaah said to His Messenger,

"Say: "This is my way; I invite to Allaah with insight, I and those who follow me. And exalted is Allaah; and I am not of those who associate others with Him."

{*Yoosuf (12): 108*}

Allaah makes it clear that the intent of stories is to put forth parables and examples. Allaah said,

"Indeed in their stories is a lesson for people of understanding. It (the Qur'aan) is not a forged statement…"

{*Yoosuf (12): 111*}

This is clear and well-known from the people of knowledge.

4. The fourth principle is for the people of knowledge, the students of knowledge and the callers to refrain from taking the *seerah* without

knowledge. It should not thus be thought that the *seerah* can be appended to or detracted from and maybe some of you have heard from those who tell stories and narratives whether in books or in lectures and the author or speaker mentions some incidents from the *seerah* and then adds his own analysis, thinking that the *seerah* contains but mere stories which can be added to and this is incorrect, and indeed null and void.[17] Therefore, the *seerah* is the *seerah* of al-Mustaphaa which does not accept additions or appendages on incidents that took place within it. If one wished to explain that which is verified then this is good for clarification and as a commentary for the people to take examples and benefits. As for adding further stories then this is incorrect and is a type of speaking about Allaah without knowledge and is rather a type of lying on the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*. So for example one will name the hadeeth about some of the battles with things that are not appropriate. They also name some of the hadeeth regarding some incidents that took place in Makkah with the companions of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* and the pledge of allegiance at 'Aqabah and the migration of the companions to Ethiopia and the

[17] So for example, some people who aim to call people to Islaam, will mention emotional or political feelings and intentions, which are not mentioned at all in the seerah! Some will append to the *seerah* an extra narrative such as **"when he came in, they were all looking at him out of awe"** or some will go further than this and even claim that one of the *Salaf*, or indeed the Prophet himself *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*, was "transfixed by the beauty of so and so (from the women) and thus he immediately knew that he had to have her." An example of this was the *Soofee* Martin (Aboo Bakr) Lings who in his *seerah* of the Prophet Muhammad *(sallallaahu alayhi wassllaam)* which is supposedly based on 'the earliest sources' claimed that the Prophet was overcome by lust for Zaynab *(radi Allaahu 'anha)*. Lings also claims that when the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* removed all of the idols out of the Ka'bah and destroyed them, he left the picture of Maryam *(alayha salaam)*!? And all of this is based on fabricated stories, uncorroborated reports and mere blind following of previous historians who relied on these false stories. Lings' biography was refuted by Aboo Bilaal Mustaphaa al-Kanadee *(raheemahullaah)*, see *Troid.org* website for the *pdf* article. [TN]

likes of these incidents, with that which is not appropriate at all and additions for story-telling. This should not be formed by a person as the affair is stern with regards to lying on the *sunnah* of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*. The greatest example of a warning against this is the saying of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* which is a *mutawattir hadeeth*, *"Whoever lies against me intentionally should prepare to take his seat in the Hellfire."*

5. The last principle is to not be hasty in criticising what the people of knowledge have highlighted about the *seerah*. This *seerah* has a station and many try to delude the people of knowledge or punish them with what is not appropriate and are hasty in this. The stories of the *seerah* and verifying them and *ijtihaad* in interpreting what it intends are abundant. So if a story or biography of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wasllaam)* or the companions is not in conflict with the texts of the Book and the *sunnah*, or is not invalid in regards to *'aqeedah* or the Divine Legislation and the *sunnah*, then its intent is accepted by the scholars. So one cannot come to us saying that one related something from the *seerah* which is not verified which could be a weak hadeeth that is in the *seerah* and its likes, therefore the foundation with them is what I have already mentioned to you in regards to expanding the diffusion the *seerah* as long as it is not transmitted from that which is invalid or rejected. This is a great foundation in which there is no escape from its importance because the criticism of the people for knowledge or trying to approach them without clear proofs is unacceptable and may even be the reason for blameworthy matters. There are some additional issues however the time is brief,

I ask Allaah, Most Glorious, Most Exalted to benefit us in the seerah of the Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wassallam) and to teach us that which will benefit us and to benefit us

with that which we learn and to increase us in knowledge, action and guidance. And I ask Allaah to rectify for us our deen which protects our affairs and to rectify for us our worldly affairs and to rectify for us our end which we will return to and to make life an increase for all good. And I ask Him to rectify those in authority of our affairs and to guide them and distance them from the people of transgression and corruption. I ask Allaah to make us from those who co-operate with them in piety and righteousness and not from those who co-operate in sin and enmity. And I ask Allaah for me, for you and for every Muslim, a righteous end with which is eternal happiness, and prayers, peace and blessings upon our Prophet Muhammad.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

QUESTION: There are some scholars who mention that efforts of righteous and pious people in their piety and prayer etc. and at times these acts of worship oppose what the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* performed. So what should be our position on such accounts?

ANSWER: All praise is due to Allaah, the actions of the scholars is not a proof on the Divine Legislation, rather the defining proof is only what the Book and *sunnah* indicate and the actions of the companions *(ridwaanullaahi alayhim)* if they are in agreement on that. What is mentioned in the biographies of some scholars is to be divided into categories: what is able to be interpreted such as some of them standing all night in prayer, this opposes the *sunnah*, or that some of them used to read the entire Qur'aan once everyday, as is transmitted with regards to Imaam ash-Shaafi'ee *(raheemahullaah)* that he used to finish the entire Qur'aan in *Ramadaan*, sixty times and what is narrated from some of them that 'Uthmaan *(radi Allaahu 'anhu)* and is actually authentic about him that he used to finish the entire Qur'aan in one *Rak'ah* on a long night, which was by the *Ka'bah*, and accounts of the like. These have been interpreted by the people of knowledge as being some of the things that some people of knowledge performed not all the time, but sometimes. With regards to completing the Qur'aan then the people of knowledge have assessed it in light of the hadeeth wherein the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* said *"it should not be completed in less than three days"* this is for whoever is able and as for using a virtuous time such as *Ramadaan* and one wishes to complete the Qur'aan in a shorter time due to this then the *Salaf* did this and thus is permitted and the hadeeth is carried with this meaning of one who usually does this regularly. Likewise, with regards to the issues of prayer and establishing the prayer

throughout the entire night if this is done as a general rule and practice, this opposes the *sunnah*. As for one whose heart is strengthened and supplicates and thus does the like of these things on only one occasion then this is his own interpretation and the *sunnah* is the decisive judge on his action. Some of the stories about the people of knowledge or about the righteous can be intrinsically null and void and transmitted in a manner which is not authentic. For example, what has been transmitted from Ahmad as a story of his *zuhd* is fabricated and such is also the case with some of the stories about Imaam Shaafi'ee which the scholars have brought attention to. Some of the things that are transmitted about the righteous are also void in light of the Divine Legislation and are not permissible to accept even if the people admonish people with them, as such stories give a negative image and model to follow. For example, so and so would only eat radishes day and night saying **"I could not find anything to eat except for radishes for two days"** due to his intense concern for seeking knowledge. He remained for five days without eating anything after buying some fish and did not eat it due to seeking knowledge! Or that so and so wanted to free himself from evil and thus crawled on the floor on his chest in order to teach himself the intensity of the punishment of the Hellfire!!? The likes of such stories are void and are not permissible to narrate to the people as they present a negative image and present a negative role model, rather the people are in need of the *sunnah* of al-Mustaphaa *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*,[18] the *seerah* of

[18] Indeed, this is sound advice for the so-called 'traditional Islam' movement in the West and its adherents, many of whom refer much to the book *'Reliance of the Traveller' (Umdat us-Saalik)* translated by Nooh (Jaa Heem!) Keller. In Keller's translation of *Reliance of the Traveller* he makes note of one Yoosuf an-Nabahani and listed him (w9.4 in the biographical dictionary, p.1111), Keller saying about Nabahani **"…one of the scholars who had the higher knowledge of Sufism."** Keller also mentioned one of Nabahani's books entitled *Jaami' Kamarmaat ul-Awliya (Compendium of the Miracles of the Friends of Allaah)*, yet in this book, which Dr Saalih as-Saalih has quoted from extensively to refute it *(A Chapter on the Dispraise of al-Hawaa by Ibnul Qayyim,)*, it is mentioned on page 396 of the second volume of the book of '*Awliya* miracles' some very strange stories indeed.

the companions *(radi Allaahu 'anhum)* and the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* said: *"As for me I fear Allaah the most of you, the most pious of you to Allaah and yet I fast and break my fast, I pray throughout the night and also sleep and I marry women. So whoever opposes my sunnah is not from me."* So perfection is with his guidance *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* so going to excess with heart-softening matters with what is not authentic in the Divine Legislation is not permissible as it brings about negative results by not having good thoughts about the people who preceded us or lying about them and the like.

QUESTION: What is your view on the story of the *gharaaneeq* (high-flying ones)[19] that is mentioned in *Mukhtasar as-Seerah*?

ANSWER: The story of the *gharaaneeq* (high flying and exalted ones) is relayed in *mursal* forms, al-Haafidh Ibn Hajar said that some of the

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Thus, we find Nabahani mentioning here, with no analysis or reflection, a story about a *"Soofee walee"* by the name of 'Ali al-'Umari who according to Nabahani conducted many miracles. In one of al-Umari's "miracles" he disciplined his servant, who was his brother in law, by whipping him with his penis which had actually extended to above and beyond his (Ali's) shoulder!! After whipping him several times, his penis returned to its normal size, the details of this story are mentioned by Nabahani in his *Jaami' (vol. 2, p.396)* which Keller praises! Furthermore, Nabahani notes Ibraaheem al-'Aryaan (d. 930 AH) who used to **"…mount the minbar giving sermons while naked…he used to fart in the presence of the respected elders of the Sufis, swearing that it was the fart of such and such."** (Nabahani's *Jaami'*, vol. 1, p.412). Nabahani also mentions "Shaykh 'Ubayeed", who was able to "pull a boat from the midst of mud after pulling it with a rope tied to his testis!!! (*Jaami'*, vol. 2p. 46). An-Nabahani mentions: **"The Shaykh 'Abdullaah, one of the companions of Sayyid 'Umar an-Nabeetee, wrote to me that he saw me with the Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wassallam) and he said to Imaam 'Ali ibn Abee Taalib: "Put this cap of mine on 'AbdulWahhaab ash-Sha'raanee (a Soofee) and inform him that he can control the entire creation at will, for there is nothing that can prevent him from this.""** (*Jaami'*, vol. 2, p.275). Nabahani also wrote **"Ubayd was one of the companions of Shaykh Husayn blessed with amazing miracles. Of them was that he would command the skies to rain, and they would rain immediately. And anyone who ridiculed him died immediately. On one occasion, he entered Ja'fariyyah (a district) and around fifty children followed him making fun of him. He said "O Azraa'eel! (the unauthentic supposed name of an angel) if you do not take their souls I will remove you from the ranks of the angels!" so they all fell down dead instantly."** (!!)

[19] *Gharaaneeq* (plural) means literally 'the Numidian cranes', birds which used to fly at great heights, it is also a term of praise to something or some people to show their exalted status. [TN]

narrations strengthened others and *mursal* narrations depend on other *mursal* narrations particularly in these narrations. The story of the *gharaaneeq* does not contradict or oppose the Divine Legislation, any text from the Qur'aan or any text from the *sunnah* of the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)*. It is from the third section and for this reason the scholars relayed it. Rather, it is possible for the story of the *gharaneeq* to be reconciled with the saying of Allaah,

"And We did not send before you any messenger or a prophet except that when he spoke (or recited), Shaytaan threw into it (some misunderstanding). But Allaah abolishes that which Shaytaan throws in; then Allaah makes precise His verses.[20] And Allaah is Knowing and Wise."

{*al-Hajj (22): 52*}

Allaah clarified that,

"We did not send before you any messenger or a prophet except that when he spoke (or recited), Shaytaan threw into it (some misunderstanding)."

Meaning: Shaytaan spoke in the form of his voice to introduce extra sayings and this came from Shaytaan. This is what we come across in the well-known story of the *gharaneeq* (high flying cranes) in His saying in Soorat un-Najm,

[20] Clarifying those issues which were misunderstood to remove any doubt.

[illegible]

[illegible]

"So have you considered al-Laat and al-'Uzzaa? And Manaat, the third – the other one?"

{*an-Najm (53): 19-20*}

In the story of the *gharaaneeq* it is mentioned that **"And they are the Gharaaneeq al-Ula (high flying ones) and their intercession is hoped for"** And the likes of these sayings, and within this is showing that the worship of these idols is correct. So when the *Mushrikeen* heard this they prostrated and then Allaah revealed:

[illegible]

"We did not send before you any messenger or a prophet except that when he spoke (or recited), Shaytaan threw into it (some misunderstanding)."

{*al-Hajj (22): 52*}

This story has been considered by the scholars and verifiers, such as al-Haafidh Ibn Hajar, Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhaab in *Mukhtasar as-Seerah* and other scholars explained the story and they did not deny it, and those scholars who did deny it did have their basis for this yet it is not stronger that the other opinion from the scholars. This is as there is nothing in the story which denies *tawheed* and for that reason the Imaams of *tawheed* have relayed it. Leaving off it is better especially for those who do not understand the issue but if the account is relayed it does have its basis.[21]

[21] The account of the *gharaaneeq* is one which Shaytaan has fascinated the *kuffaar* with, to the extent that many non-Muslim writers (usually Orientalists and their students or missionaries and their students) form their own explanations about what they have called 'Satanic verses', a term which was

QUESTION: What are the levels in studying the books of *seerah*? What should the student of knowledge begin with and what are the best books to begin with?

ANSWER: It is better to begin with the abridged *seerah* of Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhaab, the abridgements of the *seerah* of Ibn Hishaam and then after that the *Seerah Nabawiyyah* of Ibn Katheer which is long so if he looks at this and that which is correct becomes apparent then he can refer to the *seerah* of Ibn Hishaam and its abridgement. There are also some very extensive books such as the *Seerah Shaamiyyah* and the *Seerah Halabiyyah* which run into numerous volumes.

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coined by the Orientalist William Muir. As a result, many *kuffaar* writers claim that the verses in some way show that *tawheed* was not clear to the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* and this is why he recited the verses of the *gharaaneeq*, as they claim that he was "still formulating the concept of *tawheed* amongst the people" (!!) and this is nonsense. Montgomery Watt stated, claiming to have a better insight into Muhammad's *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* Prophethood that monotheism was still vague at the time of the Prophet and this other inferior divine beings were not strictly shunned, therefore according to Watt's *baatil* assessment the verses regarding the *gharaaneeq* were "views which Muhammad has always held."!! Watt mentioned this in his book Muhammad at Mecca (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953, pp.104-109). Watt tries to rationalise the context of the verses by claiming that the Prophet had some material gain by mentioning these verses; the Prophet wanted to 'attract' and 'reach-out' to the *Mushrikeen* by mentioning some of their gods and thus thought that this concession would do the trick; the Prophet wanted to increase his own socio-political standing amongst the Quraysh by mentioning some of their gods!!! At-Tabaree mentions the story of the *gharaaneeq*, yet Ibn Hishaam does not. Al-Waaqidee transmitted the story of the *gharaaneeq* to Ibn Sa'd (d.230 AH/845 AH), refer to what Shayh Saalih *(hafidhahullaah)* said in regards to al-Waaqidee earlier. The relevant verses in Soorah al-Hajj (22: 52) was revealed in the first year after Hijrah, about eight or nine years after the Prophet *(sallallaahu alayhi wassallam)* was allegedly mentioned the verses of the *gharaaneeq*, which would not take this long to be abrogated without any other source or reference about it. it would also mean that for nine years Muslims had been calling upon the *gharaaneeq al-Ulaa* and this is again absolute *baatil*. Furthermore, the verses which were allegedly interpolate from Shaytaan do not correspond with the verses in Soorah an-Najm. As the verses before and after where the verses were allegedly placed condemn turning to the false gods and even say "that is an unjust division!" the Quraysh would not have understood this to be any sort of 'concession' whatsoever to their false deities! There is not one *hadeeth* in the literature which even gives any hint to this story of extra verses, all Bukhaaree, Muslim, Aboo Daawood, an-Nasaa'ee and Imaam Ahmad note is that the Mushrikeen prostrated at the end of Soorah an-Najm as they were overawed. [TN]

QUESTION: What is you opinion on those books of seerah such as *ar-Raheeq al-Makhtoom* and the book of Aboo Bakr al-Jazaa'iree?

ANSWER: These books contain benefit and *ar-Raheeq al-Makhtoom* is good and also the book of Abee Bakr al-Jazaa'iree is also good. However, there are some issues which have been assessed by the people of *seerah* yet these books have more benefits than other works that have been authored in these later years.